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Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6672nd meeting

Wednesday, 30 November 2011, 11.05 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Moraes Cabral	(Portugal)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Yang Tao
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mr. Amieyeofori
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

Letter dated 18 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2011/726)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

11-61237 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

Letter dated 18 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2011/726)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Australia, Belgium, Costa Rica, Egypt, Finland, Guatemala, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, the Sudan, and Switzerland to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/726, which contains a letter dated 18 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): First, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate on working methods of the Security Council. This is the fourth open debate on the topic, which reflects the increased interest on the part of the entire United Nations membership, as well as the increased transparency of the Security Council in its work and its intention to interact with the general membership when addressing matters of mutual concern and benefit.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has chaired the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions with great interest and a firm commitment to further promoting the transparency and efficiency of the Security Council's work. With that in mind, we organized a workshop on working methods for the United Nations membership, in cooperation with Japan, our predecessor in chairing the Informal Working Group. We also participated in the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly.

The Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has held four meetings. Allow me to draw attention to some of the issues discussed among the members of the Informal Working Group in those meetings.

With regard to streamlining the summary statement on matters of which the Council is seized, we began looking at ways to reduce the list of those issues under active consideration. The present guidelines governing the maintenance of the summary statement are contained in section IX of the note by the President of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507). However, this is an ongoing process, and further progress is needed, bearing in mind that paragraph 53 of document S/2010/507 provides for the Council to review the summary statement at the beginning of each year to determine if the Council has concluded its consideration of any of the listed items. Therefore, January 2012 might be an appropriate time to take up this matter.

We also discussed the evenness of the Council's work, which implies a more even distribution of the adoption of resolutions pertaining to mandate cycles and reporting.

During the meeting held on 28 April 2011 on General Assembly revitalization, we witnessed the interest of the United Nations Member States in possible ways of involving them in matters of the Security Council's working methods. We were asked questions about their possible involvement in rationalizing the items on the Security Council agenda, revitalizing the working methods of the Security Council, and the review and decision-making processes related to items on the Security Council agenda.

Mindful of the calls of the general United Nations membership for enhanced cooperation, Bosnia and Herzegovina has raised the issue of further increasing the transparency of the Council's work and has suggested to the members of the Informal Working Group that they consider the idea of holding regular briefings on Security Council working methods for non-Council Member States. We are of the view that this exercise could be of common benefit. It could be a valuable opportunity for the Council to periodically

review progress in the implementation of certain measures, take into account the views of the general membership, and, if necessary, consider possible adequate adjustments.

Bearing in mind the primary responsibility of the Security Council for maintaining international peace and security, Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that the Security Council has achieved substantial progress in recent years regarding the improvement and openness of its working methods, as outlined in the presidential note 507. We reiterate our previously stated stance that the implementation of presidential note 507 should be based on the need to find a proper and adequate balance between generally accepted principles or guidelines on efficiency, transparency and interaction, on the one hand, and dialogue with non-members, on the other. In this regard, we welcome the continued engagement of the group of five small nations in making constructive and positive contributions to the improvement of the Council's working methods, both formally and informally.

Having been a member of the Council for almost two years now, we must acknowledge the importance of informal consultations to the decision-making process. Nevertheless, there must be more balance between the Council's informal consultations and the holding of public meetings. Moreover, we cannot neglect the importance of informal interaction with the wider membership, including informal interactive dialogue. This year, the Council has held four informal interactive dialogue meetings on Burundi, Darfur, Eritrea and Libya. We are of the view that such interaction is an added value to the Council's decision-making process, and has the potential to generate a sense of common ownership and strengthen the prospects for effective implementation.

We recognize the improvement made with regard to continued briefings and consultations by the Council with troop- and police-contributing countries as part of the efforts to implement peacekeeping mandates more effectively. We deem that there is room for the Security Council to enhance its interaction with other United Nations bodies, especially the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The main communication tool between the Council and the general membership is the Security Council's annual report, which we believe should comprise more analytical and substantial features.

When we speak about the transparency of the work of the Security Council, we imply not only interaction with non-Council members, but also increased transparency concerning the broader public, non-governmental organizations and the media. Bosnia and Herzegovina feels that the Arria Formula meeting is an adequate tool for engaging in a more informal dialogue with the United Nations membership, concerned countries, regional and subregional groups, experts, representatives of civil society, and the media.

Today, the United Nations Member States have another opportunity to reflect on the successful working methods of the Council, as well as on those practices where there is room for possible improvement. This exchange of experiences and perspectives can be useful in consolidating the Security Council's best practices for the common benefit.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We attach great importance to the convening of this open debate of the Security Council on the issue of its working methods. In our view, the very fact of conducting the meeting in this format bears witness to the improved transparency of the Council's work. Pursuant to the United Nations Charter, the Security Council is responsible for establishing its own rules of procedure, but we are prepared today to listen carefully to the views of our colleagues on how to make the Council's work more effective.

It is clear that the Council is the organ that bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and is at the service of the international community as a whole. We wish nevertheless to note that, in the context of the discussion of working method reform, questions are often focused on broader topics, such as how successfully and appropriately the Council is implementing its Charter-mandated tasks. For instance, the Council is criticized for encroaching on the prerogatives of the other United Nations bodies. I note that we share this concern. Our colleagues on the Council are well aware that the Russian Federation has always soberly and selectively reacted to initiatives for the Council to consider thematic issues, particularly if they are generic in nature. We believe that the Council should focus on issues on which it can and must take concrete decisions.

We also understand the concern that the Council may too often resort to Chapter VII of the Charter,

including the application of sanctions. In that regard, we stress that the Russian Federation has consistently called on the Council to make more active use of the toolkit of preventive diplomacy and to invest in the development of mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes. The provisions of Chapters VI and VIII should be fully exploited. Sanctions and the use of force to settle conflict are appropriate when all possibilities for peaceful settlement have been exhausted, the threat to international peace and security is clear, and the decision to resort to Chapter VII enjoys the broadest possible support of Council members.

An interesting and very relevant example is that we have recently seen inconsistent and broad interpretation of the decisions of the Security Council in situations where such decisions are supplemented or undermined by unilateral measures of pressure. We believe such activities to be unacceptable and to undermine the Council's authority. We stress the importance of this issue, but in our view it transcends the agenda item on the Council's working methods. Another set of provisions that bear no relation to the Council's working methods is that pertaining to the right of veto.

In order to make the Council even more effective and responsive to realities on the ground, we must work meticulously to improve its working methods. To that end, we established and operationalized the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Although its activities are not public, it is working in organized, rational and constructive interaction with all interested delegations of Member States. It should be understood in that respect that proposals to enhance the transparency of the Council's activities should not undermine its effectiveness or its ability to respond promptly to situations. Dialogue on this important issue must be carried out in a balanced and professional manner, without politicization.

We feel that improving the quality of the Council's interaction with other United Nations bodies on issues within the Council's competence to be another key issue in improving the Councils working methods. One relevant task in that regard would be the future formulation of effective forms and methods for dialogue between the Council and the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, other United Nations bodies, regional organizations and international partners. The practice of holding operational consultations between Council members and troop-and police-contributing countries must be maintained.

Much has been done recently to improve the Council's working methods. The number of open meetings on various issues has grown, and informal interactive dialogue and Arria Formula meetings have been held. One instrument of regular contact between the Council and interested non-members is the traditional briefing given by the Council presidency. Russia will assume the presidency tomorrow, and we invite all to a meeting, to be held on Friday, 2 December, at which I shall discuss the highlights of the Council's schedule for next month. I note that 178 Permanent Representatives have been invited to that meeting, but only eight attended the last such briefing.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like, at the outset, to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this debate on the Security Council's working methods. I also wish to thank the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina for his introduction, as well as for his outstanding work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

This debate should first be an opportunity to hear from Members of the Organization about the way in which the Security Council works. On our part, we consider the working methods to be a tool for the Council to work effectively. In that regard, I should like to make several comments.

My first comment has to do with the efforts that have been made to improve the Council's working methods. The 2010 revision of presidential note 507 (S/2010/507) on best practices clarified our working methods, for which we thank the delegation of Japan. Several points are worthy of mention. The presidency has a responsibility to provide all Members and officials of the Organization with the information they need with regard to the Council's work. It is therefore important to continue with the established practice of providing them the programme of work at the beginning of each month.

Most of the Council's meetings are held in public or entail a public part. Moreover, there are today more debates open to all delegations, which is a good thing. We believe that the public format should prevail when it comes to issues of general interest. Recently, we

should have heard from the High Commissioner for Human Rights here in the Chamber, rather than in consultations.

On the initiative of France and the United Kingdom, a regular dialogue has been established with troop contributors to peacekeeping operations. With the agreement of all delegations concerned, we should now make that dialogue more substantial. Another positive aspect is the fact that the President of the Council now meets regularly with the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and that the Chairs of the country-specific configurations are invited to participate in the Council's meetings.

My second comment pertains to the fact that the Council has demonstrated its ability to adapt to new demands. The Council is the master of its agenda and its procedures, which are uncomplicated and allow for its practices to change with the needs. It is an asset for the Council to be able to adapt its work and functioning to new demands. Many examples point to the fact that it can do so. The Council meets more frequently to hold thematic debates, which make it possible for it to refine its approach to issues pertaining to international peace and security. To that end, it turns to the expertise of regional organizations and specialized international bodies, as well as to civil society in general. At the same time, we should implement the recommendation of the group of five small nations to strengthen the links between the Security Council's work on thematic issues — such as the rule of law, combating impunity, protecting civilians and new threats — and its efforts on specific situations.

Another example is the fact that the Council now has regular exchanges with the Department of Political Affairs on situations of risk that merit particular attention. In doing so, it is better able to anticipate and predict crises. It is important to pursue that effort and to bring in representatives of the Secretary-General on thematic issues, in particular when it comes to preventing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Lastly, today the Council has better follow-up of crisis situations and of the decisions it takes. In that connection, during its presidency in May, France organized a debate on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/PV.6539) that brought together the main stakeholders as well as other Congolese officials. The meeting was preceded by a seminar with non-governmental organizations that made it possible to consolidate consensus on a complex issue. We believe that such an exercise, including broad agreement, could be useful and productive.

Finally, I would like to underscore the importance of continuing to innovate. In the course of the past month, the reality on the international stage has compelled the Council to take important decisions in difficult circumstances. It is also worth noting that, in spite of our political differences at times, cases of recourse to procedural points were the rare exception. That illustrates that the Security Council works well. We should therefore continue to innovate to take better decisions. To that end, various avenues could be pursued. First, missions to the field provide an opportunity for members of the Council to better understand the reality and to speak directly with local stakeholders. There should be a way to better define the goals for such missions in more operational terms.

Videoconferencing is now being used to communicate with United Nations missions on the ground. That makes it possible for the Council to be informed directly and in real time. It also allows United Nations officials to avoid having to make a trip to New York when it is important for them to be present in the field. The use of this tool could perhaps be made more systematic.

The Council has developed a new meeting format that allows it to better exchange views with Members of the United Nations on situations that concern them directly. In that regard, the interactive dialogue format is sufficiently flexible to respond to several categories of need. For instance, it made it possible to hold several meetings with Chadian officials before we withdrew the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad. In principle, we support this type of exercise.

In conclusion, today we will hear many ideas for improving the Council's working methods. We encourage the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation to compile the operational recommendations to be made.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, for your initiative to organize this debate on the Security Council's working methods. Clearly, this is one of the most important issues on our agenda.

I should also like to thank Ambassador Ivan Barbalić of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the competency with which he leads the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Lastly, I would like to emphasize that the contribution of previous chairs of the Group, including Japan, should also be acknowledged.

The issue before us has to do with the very functioning of this body and, beyond that, with global governance itself, in particular when it comes to international peace and security. In order to grasp the full scope of the issue, it would be useful to consider the Council's working methods in the context of the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, which confers important responsibilities and competencies on the Security Council.

The work of the General Assembly Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council serves as a framework for the deliberations of Member States on the issue of the Council's working methods. Moreover, the Informal Working Group on Documentation has made it possible to consolidate the momentum on internal reform with a view to achieving greater transparency and participation in the Council's work for States that are not members of the Council.

Effectiveness in carrying out the Security Council's mission calls for establishing a more open and collegial relationship in the Council and between its members and the membership of the Organization as a whole.

My delegation welcomes the considerable progress that has been made over the years in improving the working methods of the Council. That progress reflects the Council's outstanding ability to adapt to the sweeping changes in our world with the emergence of new State and non-State actors on the international stage and the growing role of regional and subregional organizations in conflict resolution and peacekeeping.

I wish to make two observations in that respect. The first concerns the need for closer cooperation between the Council and regional and subregional organizations in the management of crises and armed conflicts. Sending timely high-level missions of Council members to countries facing unstable situations that could threaten international peace and security could be a powerful mechanism for crisis management and the prevention of armed conflict, assuming, of course, the full cooperation of the States in question and of subregional institutions. Such actions could be initiated either by the Council by direct recommendation of the Secretary-General, or by invitation of the Governments concerned. That would give greater visibility to the Security Council's role in crisis management well before such situations explode into violent armed conflicts that often require onerous peacekeeping operations.

My second remark concerns the need to increase the number of consultations between the Security Council and subregional organizations that play an active role in crisis resolution and the settlement of armed conflicts, such as the African Union, above all when the Council acts under Article VI of the Charter. That would enhance coordination with the relevant bodies of the African Union and guarantee more effective short-, medium- and long-term action with respect to lasting solutions to crises.

In that spirit, we call for greater interaction with troop-contributing countries, not only once a peacekeeping mission is under way, but from the earliest stage of its conception. The role of troop-contributing countries is therefore indispensable to assuring the success of peace missions authorized by the Council. It not only enables the Council to better respond to the wishes of a host country, but also guarantees closer adherence to the principle of good conduct by troops on the ground serving under United Nations mandate.

It would also be useful to encourage the regular exchange of information between the Security Council and other bodies of this Organization, in particular between the Council and the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission. That would contribute to increasing transparency and confidence in the Council's actions.

Another important evolution in the Council's work can be seen in the thematic debates organized by the Council's rotating presidencies. Those debates, which are often open to the entire membership of our Organization, make a significant contribution to our consideration of the multiple challenges to international peace and security. It is nonetheless important to clearly define their focus so as not to

encroach on the competencies of each organ. Taken as a whole, such measures also highlight the importance of the Council acting with a degree of flexibility in order to make them more effective.

Before concluding, I would like briefly to emphasize the need for greater transparency in the process of negotiations on certain resolutions. All resolutions, along with many other documents, should be subject to a broad process of consultation well in advance of their submission for discussion. That would guarantee greater transparency and cohesion, as well as greater unity within the Council. Such an approach should also prevail in the designation of the leadership of the organs and subsidiary bodies of the Security Council.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for having convened this debate, which is of great interests to the entire membership of our Organization. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the preparatory work by the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Ivan Barbalić, as Chairman of the Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters, a subsidiary body of the Council whose work is important to all Members. The Working Group has identified certain areas and issues that demand the Council's attention in order to achieve greater transparency, participation, efficiency and accountability in the Council's fulfilment of its responsibilities in the areas of international peacekeeping and security.

The Group's work is summarized in presidential note S/2010/507, whose adoption represented a significant step forward. Although we feel that it would be premature to undertake an evaluation of the process of implementing the guidelines for the practices contained in that important document, we believe that Council members should keep this issue under permanent review.

We stress the importance of the goal set forth in the note with respect to interaction and dialogue with non-member of the Council. The rigidity imposed by the traditional formats of Council meetings has been gradually overcome through the establishment of such practices as holding informal interactive dialogues in which members of this organ have benefited from the opportunity to make their views heard on a range of themes in direct exchange with intergovernmental organizations and with representatives of Governments of non-member countries. Aside from the question of the capacity in which Council members act in such meetings, the central point is that direct contact with such organizations and countries offers benefits that otherwise would be difficult to obtain. We wish to emphasize the role that new technologies should play in that process.

To those who maintain that the efforts required for the Council to consider matters of a general nature would unnecessarily dilute the Council's attention, when discussion of such matters more natural belongs in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council or other United Nations organs, we believe that that is simply a way to rationalize the working methods of other organs.

An important development that contributes to improving transparency is the noticeable increase in the number of open debates held each month. The participation of non-members in such debates should contribute towards the same goal of airing different points of view and enriching the arguments available to Council members in adopting their decisions.

It may seem contradictory for open debates to be held in which presidential statements or resolutions that had been previously negotiated among Council members are adopted. A reasonable break should be allowed between an open debate and the negotiation and adoption of such documents to allow Council members to incorporate points of view that emerged in the debate. By the same token, it would be useful to reflect on possible formulas that would guarantee broad participation in those debates, as well as to ensure that statements are confined within rational limits and serve to convey a substantive conceptual contribution.

The same logic can be applied to meetings with troop-contributing countries, whose raison d'être should be to enrich the basic outcomes so that the Council adopts them and acts in the areas of peacekeeping operations in greatest need. If that exercise is to have greater significance, it is imperative for meetings to be scheduled sufficiently in advance and for the Secretariat produce an executive summary of the main points, from which Council members can extract elements to be included in or to enrich their decisions on renewing the mandates of ongoing peacekeeping operations.

The established practice of meeting with interested countries at the start or end of every month to enable the presidency to inform them about the provisional programme of work and discuss it is of great use and an important contribution to the transparency of the Council's work. My delegation believes it important to stress that the reports of the Secretary-General are key to matters under consideration by the Council. That should not prevent the Council from consulting other sources of information, so long as such sources are accurate, objective and verifiable.

Another positive development is the greater transparency that has been established with respect to the management of the procedures and selection criteria that have been established to decide on the inclusion of persons, groups, organizations or entities on the lists related to terrorism as well as their exclusion. We welcome the decision to establish the Ombudsman Office as an independent and impartial body charged with reviewing such lists in order to ensure that the Council's actions take matters of due process into account.

In conclusion, I should like to say that my delegation shares the views of those speakers who stated that any debate on the methods of work of the Council should focus on matters such as transparency, interaction with non-members and the efficiency of the Council's work. We stand ready to listen closely to the points of view of all delegations that have requested to speak during today's debate.

Mr. Amieyeofori (Nigeria): Mr. President, allow me to convey our appreciation to you for having convened this timely debate on the working methods of the Security Council. We also appreciate the precise concept paper (S/2011/726) circulated by your delegation in advance of this discussion.

Reforming the working methods of the Security Council remains a matter of urgency given the decisive role that the Council plays in the affairs of Member States. It is therefore encouraging that the Security Council has done much work recently to improve the efficiency and transparency of its work as well as its interaction and dialogue with non-members of the Council. Just last year, the Council adopted a revised presidential note (S/2010/507) that reinforced its intention to enhance dialogue with troop-contributing countries and the use of informal dialogue. Undoubtedly, the activities of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under the able leadership of Ambassador Ivan Barbalić, have also helped to reinforce this improvement.

The Council should not, however, rest on its laurels. Much work could still be done to enhance efficiency and transparency, thus engendering greater confidence on the part of the broader United Nations membership and global public. There is no doubt that a continued improvement in the content and narrative quality of the Council's annual report is necessary if we are to meet the expectations of non-members of the Council.

Here we commend the efforts of the German delegation in preparing the annual report for 2010/2011 (A/66/2), particularly for continuing with the practice of consultation with non-members of the Council. We would recall that the important suggestions received from non-members of the Council greatly enriched our work in preparing the report for 2009/2010 (A/65/2). This practice should be sustained and improved upon.

To improve on the information available to the broader United Nations membership, the respective Presidents of the Council should speak more often to the media, and lead countries should provide more information to the public. The Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council will need to sustain their regular discussions in order to improve complementarity in the work of those organs. In addition, the Chairs of subsidiary bodies should be encouraged to hold periodic briefings on their activities and schedule more spontaneous and productive sessions with non-Council members. Adequate and timely information on their activities will be useful to the wider United Nations membership.

Nigeria welcomes the efforts made to improve interaction with troop- and police-contributing countries and regional organizations. As a major troop-contributing country, we see great value in enhancing interaction with troop-contributing countries as well as the Peacebuilding Commission. This is imperative during implementation, change in, renewal of, or completion of mandates, or when there has been a rapid deterioration of the situation on the ground. The proper sequencing of such meetings is crucial if we are to achieve meaningful results. It is also essential to

invite the countries and parties concerned to the deliberations of the Council to share local perspectives and specialized knowledge relating to issues on the Council's agenda. That principle informed our commitment to greater and more frequent involvement of the troop-contributing countries in the activities of the Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, chaired by Nigeria.

The Security Council's field missions have been useful in providing an adequate impression of local realities. Council discussions have also been enriched through dialogue with various actors at the national and regional levels. As a nation from the continent accounting for about 70 per cent of the issues on the Council's agenda, we see such missions as very useful and productive. It may be helpful to prolong the duration of such visits so as to provide ample time for engagement with local and regional actors.

The Council's working methods offer the tools necessary to ensure efficiency and transparency in its work. We are under no illusion that the tools are sufficient to address all challenges. The right mix of these tools and flexibility will help to underpin the Council's efforts, pursuant to presidential note S/2010/507. It is also important to continuously identify gaps and make the required changes.

Our discussion today, under the Portuguese presidency, represents such an effort. In that context, we must not lose sight of the need to improve the Council's effectiveness in preventing conflicts. The Council's commitment to Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and preventive diplomatic strategies will greatly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Mr. President, I, too, should like to thank you for having initiated today's open debate. It provides a good opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved so far and where improvements could be made.

Much has been achieved. Discussions at this year's retreat for the incoming newly elected members were also dedicated to ideas and suggestions on how to improve the work of the Council and make it more transparent and efficient.

The regular briefings by the Department of Political Affairs are an important improvement, particularly in the context of the Arab Spring. These briefings have allowed for discussions on matters of international peace and security that have not yet become formal agenda items. They also allow the Council to be more flexible and responsive to evolving situations on the ground, contributing also to a stronger preventive role of the Council.

Among the Council's subsidiary bodies, the sanctions committees have become a major field of activity for the Council and its members. Here, too, the working methods have become more efficient and transparent over the past years. The establishment of a focal point for delisting, and, in the case of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, of an Ombudsperson in particular are important innovations with direct benefit for the wider United Nations membership.

There is also some discussion on the selection procedure and the accountability of the expert panels established to support the sanctions committees in their work. While a discussion on this issue may be warranted, it is our view that this should neither result in excessively delaying the beginning of the work of new experts, nor lead to any infringement on the independence of such experts in the implementation of their mandate. It is precisely their independence, combined with their expert knowledge, that provides the added benefit not only to the Security Council but also to the wider United Nations membership. We thus are strongly in favour of their reports, as a general rule, being made public.

An open and transparent relationship between the Security Council and the wider United Nations membership remains crucial for the political acceptance and relevance of the Council, as well as for the implementation of its resolutions. As President of the Security Council for the month of July 2011, Germany drafted the introduction of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/66/2). In preparing for the compilation of the report, we built on the good practice of holding, together with Nigeria and Portugal, an informal meeting with the wider United Nations membership. We also asked the presidency to separate the debates on the annual report and on the issue of Security Council reform in order to allow for a more focused debate on both issues. These are but two examples of how the Council can better satisfy the legitimate interests of the broader

membership in enhanced transparency and accessibility of the Council in its work.

We fully agree with the goal expressed in your concept paper, Mr. President, preparing for today's debate, of improving involvement by all stakeholders such as concerned non-members of the Council and relevant regional organizations. Concrete steps could include more frequent use of the Arria-formula meetings or giving troop contributors and other stakeholders the opportunity for joint input in Council consultations. We also share the goal of enhancing the role of the Military Staff Committee. We appreciate the current practice of regular informal meetings of the Committee open to all 15 members of the Council, and encourage its continuation.

The relationship between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has become more interactive and dynamic. The chairpersons of the PBC country-specific configurations now regularly brief the Council when a particular country's situation is under consideration. They bring to the table a different perspective that can complement the Council's assessment of a given situation. In this context, their participation in Council consultations should also be envisaged. There is also still potential for improvement in ensuring that the Council can and will draw on the PBC's advice on broader peacebuilding perspectives.

Important progress has been made in enhancing the relationship between the Security Council and thematic Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, such as those for children and armed conflict and sexual violence in conflict. Similarly, the briefings provided by the Executive Director of UN-Women and representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have been important to the Council's work. In our view, the Council has greatly benefited from their analyses and reports. The same holds true for the briefings provided by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. Germany supports regular participation by these Offices in briefings and at consultations of the Security Council.

We also believe that the Council should be more open to an enhanced relationship with the Human Rights Council, not least because of the role that the independent commissions of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council play in several situations on the Security Council's agenda.

Lastly, we welcome the initiative of Member States in presenting concrete proposals for reform of the working methods of the Security Council. As I mentioned before, we support many of the ideas contained in the initiative proposed by the so-called group of five small nations. However, Germany strongly supports improvement of the Council's working methods as part of a comprehensive reform of the Council. Focusing only on its working methods resembles a band-aid approach to a more structural issue that, in our view, can be addressed only by making the membership of the Council more representative of the world we live in today.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): We commend you, Mr. President, for holding this open debate to consider and assess the working methods of the Security Council, the organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. That is the reason for the particular significance of the working methods the Council uses to carry out its duties and responsibilities, and their ability to help it improve its efficiency in view of its increasing workload and the growing number of peacekeeping operations and political missions. I should like to commend the role played in this by the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially its Permanent Representative Ambassador Barbalić, and the important follow-up undertaken by the group of five small nations and the proposals they have submitted.

The Security Council's working methods have evolved considerably in the past few years. We are pleased to note the action it has taken to increase transparency and interaction between Council members and non-members, and we would like to see more of this approach. Improving the Council's working methods, in our view, should be a means to enhance its effectiveness in implementing its resolutions without selectivity or bias, pending the comprehensive reform that we all desire and that should, of course, include the issue of membership. The issue of the right of veto and the way it is exercised should also be revisited.

We stress the importance of increasing the number of open debates and reducing the number of closed meetings, which would enable the Council to listen to and interact with non-members' proposals and ideas, and add to the transparency of its work. We do recognize, however, the need to strike a balance between transparency and efficiency in order to ensure that such meetings are productive and non-routine. We

also welcome the coordinating meetings that the Council holds with troop- and police-contributing countries, which are among the instruments that enable the Council to implement its policies. Such interaction should be strengthened so as to include host countries.

In accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, it is essential that we increase cooperation between the Council and regional organizations, especially on matters concerning international peace and security. We also call for strengthened interaction between the Security Council and the heads of other United Nations organs, particularly the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We also believe that the Security Council's annual reports and the monthly reports prepared by the rotating presidencies should include more detailed analysis useful to non-members of the Council. The monthly informational briefings that the President of the Council holds for non-member States are a beneficial practice, while informing the media as to the basic thrust of closed consultations also enables other Member States to follow the Council's activities.

Finally, we support the view of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions that its processes must be more focused and flexible. In this context, documents should be prepared in all six official languages in a timely manner, which is an important step towards strengthening transparency.

In conclusion, I am grateful to the President for the concept note (see S/2011/726, annex) prepared by the Portuguese delegation for this debate.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate and for preparing the concept note on the Security Council's working methods (see S/2011/726, annex).

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We welcome the improvements in the implementation of the July 2006 note by the President of the Council (S/2006/507) and the overall progress that has been made in improving the working methods of the Security Council. We acknowledge that the implementation of the note is an important contribution to enhancing the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work.

A welcome development has been the significant improvement the Council has shown in increasing the number of its public meetings, and the greater frequency of public briefings by special envoys and representatives. We also commend the increased interaction between the President of the Council and the general United Nations membership. While these measures are modest, they are nonetheless important steps towards improving the Council's work and ensuring greater transparency and accountability.

More, however, must be done to ensure that such developments translate into substantive and meaningful engagement between the Security Council and the general membership, and that the views of the latter are reflected in the Council's actions. My delegation also welcomes the increased interaction between the President of the Council and the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

There is growing recognition of the linkage between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The Council, in our view, has thus gained from its increased interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). This interaction should, however, translate into a reflection of the views of the PBC in the Council's consideration of peacekeeping mandates. Similarly, interaction with troop-contributing countries has increased and meetings have been scheduled well in advance of Council meetings. My delegation has also appreciated hearing the views of force commanders in their briefings to the Council during the year. A further challenge is ensuring that these measures are implemented and made permanent. In that regard, we support the call for formalizing the Council's rules of procedure in order to improve its transparency and accountability.

There has been some progress in enhancing and strengthening the partnership between the United Nations Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU). Nonetheless, challenges still exist in achieving the desired complementarity in the areas of conflict prevention, management and resolution between the United Nations and the African Union. We are of the view that the President of the Security Council could interact regularly with the President of the African Union Peace

and Security Council on issues that are on the agendas of both Councils. The two Councils could further benefit from more interaction and substantive discussion on a regular basis. In that regard, the use of video technology could be successfully deployed to regularize such interactions between the United Nations Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council.

In conclusion, we are of the view that minor changes to the working methods will not necessary address the more fundamental issue that affects the legitimacy and credibility of the Council, which is linked to the fact that the current configuration of the Council is unrepresentative, in particular in the permanent category. We think that we must therefore speed up the process of reform of the Council to make it more representative.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): The Security Council is mandated by the United Nations Charter with the primary responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security, including by coercive action. What it does and the manner in which it goes about doing its work are, however, of interest to the entire international community. The Council's work as well as its working methods thus become of importance for us all.

I would like to place on record, Mr. President, my delegation's deep appreciation that you and your delegation have organized this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council, despite a clear lack of enthusiasm on the part of some members of the Council, who openly state that the issue of the Council's working methods is the exclusive preserve of its permanent members. I also want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the efforts of our colleague from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ivan Barbalić, for chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

I also want to align myself with the statement that is to be made by my colleague from Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Security Council's composition — rooted in the situation obtaining in 1945 — and its working methods are both divorced from the contemporary reality of international relations. Its non-transparent rules of procedures remain "provisional", even after the Council's existence for six and a half decades. The Council's reluctance to consult with those affected by its decisions, its refusal to harness the capabilities of the wider United Nations membership and its all too evident eagerness to apply methods of coercion under Chapter VII, to the neglect of provisions under Chapters VI and VIII, are not only anachronistic, but, as experience has shown on a day-to-day basis, also counter-productive. They also detract from the Council's effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of its mandate to ensure international peace and security. Despite all of that, the Council is ever more eager to encroach on the Charter-mandated role of other United Nations organs.

The time has come, therefore, for the Council to seriously consider why many of its decisions are not having their intended effect; why a large number of Member States are not able or willing to respond to its numerous requests for national reports on implementation of its coercive decisions; why it has to resort so often to coercive measures under Chapter VII; why it does not command enough trust and respect from the international community — or even confidence in itself — to mandate measures under Chapter VI; why it fails to take recourse to cooperation with regional organizations under Chapter VIII to solve regional problems; and, most important of all, how the Council can address its failures and increase its effectiveness and efficiency.

Let me share an Indian perspective on how the Security Council could better its performance. First, the permanent members of the Security Council must recognize, not only individually but also collectively, that the Council must be reformed to make it reflect the contemporary realities of the international system. Secondly, the international community as a whole must be cognizant that enlarging the Security Council to reflect contemporary geopolitical realities would improve its representative character. It would also increase the representation of developing countries — which comprise the vast majority of the United Nations membership — who are ready, capable and willing to shoulder responsibility and contribute through all required means to the maintenance of international peace and security. Thirdly, there is need for real improvement in the Council's working methods to enhance its legitimacy, effectiveness and efficiency. Cosmetic changes will not help. Real improvements demand change in both process and approach, which requires reform of the composition of the Council.

Insofar as the working methods of the Security Council are concerned, the first and foremost necessity is to make them transparent. Access to documentation and information is an issue of particular concern. The tendency of the Security Council to hold closed meetings that have no records should also be curbed.

We then have the issue of "pen holders". Quite apart from the fact that it takes quite a while to understand what the concept of a pen holder is and which member is holding which pen for which issue, it is difficult to understand why pen holding should basically be a monopoly of permanent members, with concentration in even fewer fingers.

The quality of briefings that we receive often gives rise to questions of their being skewed and not really neutral, objective and based on observed facts. I also find it strange that reporting of the Council's proceedings tends to be judgmental. For example, on both occasions during our term on the Council when vetoes were exercised, the Department of Public Information reports used the expression "failed to adopt" to describe what transpired.

Based on our experience during the past 11 months, I would like to suggest some specific points for consideration. First, the Council should amend its procedures so that items do not remain on its agenda permanently. There are matters that have been discussed for decades. In such cases, further attention should require that some valid reasons be proffered by those seeking retention of those items on the agenda. Second, the Council's consideration of issues should be rationalized, so that issues do not come for consideration so often and routinely as to bog down the limited time that the Council has at its disposal.

Third, Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter must be fully implemented, by consulting with non-Security Council members on a regular basis, especially Members with a special interest in the substantive matter under consideration by the Council. Fourth, non-members must be given systematic access to subordinate organs of the Security Council, including the right to participate. Fifth, the participation of troop- and police-contributing countries in decision-making about peacekeeping operations must extend to the establishment, conduct, review and termination of peacekeeping operations, including the extension and change of mandates and specific operational issues.

Sixth, countries having a specific interest in a particular agenda item must be consulted before an outcome document on that item is adopted. Seventh, the Council should concentrate its time and efforts on dealing with issues concerning its primary responsibility for international peace and security as mandated by the Charter, rather than encroaching on the mandate of the General Assembly. Eighth, before mandating measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council should first make serious efforts at pacific settlement of disputes through measures under Chapter VI. In that connection, the Council must also improve its cooperation with regional organizations, particularly with the African Union, since a large volume of the Council's work concerns the African continent. Such cooperation must be serious and include providing assistance to the African Union in its capacity-building efforts as per their requirement and not just when it is convenient or fashionable.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the considered view of my delegation that genuine reform in the working methods of the Council really requires a comprehensive reform in the membership of the Council, with expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories and improvement in its working procedures. This is essential for both the credibility and the continued confidence of the international community in this institution.

Mr. Yang Tao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank the Portuguese presidency for the initiative to hold this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council. It will not only help Council members to engage in in-depth consideration and discussion of the working methods but will also help them to hear the opinions of others, particularly those of the developing countries, which make up the majority of the United Nations membership. We have listened carefully to previous speakers, including the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We wish to express our appreciation to Bosnia and Herzegovina for its contribution as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

In recent years the Security Council has held several open debates on its working methods. China has always valued and supported improving the working methods of the Council so as to enhance its transparency and efficiency so that it can better carry out its work in accordance with the United Nations

Charter and the Council's provisional rules of procedure and to better implement its primary Charter-mandated responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

The Security Council has made many efforts to improve its working methods, including, among others, using the format of public meetings as much as possible and the regular briefings for non-members of the Council by the rotating Council presidency on the monthly schedule of work. Innovative methods such as informal interactive dialogue have given Council members opportunities to exchange opinions with regard to sensitive situations on the Council's agenda with countries involved. The Council has also improved its annual report submitted to the General Assembly.

On the other hand, there is still room for improvement of the Council's working methods. The 2010 note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507) should therefore be further implemented.

The Security Council and various other United Nations organs should carry out their work in accordance with the division of labour, their comparative advantages and the demands of the United Nations Charter in an integrated and coordinated manner that results in synergy instead of duplication of efforts, controversy and waste of resources. The Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should maintain communication through their Presidents.

China supports the Security Council providing to countries involved in situations on the Council's agenda more opportunities to present their positions and opinions. We also hope that mechanisms such as the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and the meetings of the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) will be better used to strengthen interaction among the Security Council, the TCCs and the Secretariat in carrying out preventive diplomacy and in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The Council should encourage and support regional organizations such as the African Union and the League of Arab States and hear their opinions better before making a decision.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by thanking Portugal for calling for today's debate. Ensuring that the Security Council adopts the most efficient working methods is essential to the continuing effectiveness of this body. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that it is equipped to deal with all matters of international peace and security as effectively as possible. The United Kingdom treats this obligation seriously and fully supports the ongoing process to seek out new ways to improve efficiency, transparency and effectiveness.

The United Kingdom has made some important contributions to this process over the last year, in particular those aimed at strengthening its focus on conflict prevention. I am pleased that we have helped to embed the horizon-scanning sessions into the Council's programme of work as a regular item. The United Kingdom has promoted more informal sessions to stimulate debate on various challenges facing the United Nations, particularly around peacekeeping.

We have also made more use during our presidency of video technology to get real-time updates from the various front lines where the United Nations operates. We are pleased that that has now become standard practice. Several special representatives have themselves commented to us that they welcome the fact that they can now keep the Council informed and updated without having to take days out of their schedule to travel to New York. We are also encouraging more opportunities for the Council to hear expert and specialized advice, for instance from the Peacebuilding Commission and the Military Staff Committee.

We should continue to support those practices and find new ways in which to evolve and adapt. If we see something that does not work as well as it could, we should not be afraid of addressing it. And if we see an opportunity to make a positive change to how we work, we should consider how best to embrace it. We should continue, for instance, to welcome more ways to increase the transparency of the Council, provided that this is balanced against the need for it to work effectively. We support more open sessions with different formats, such as Arria-style, or informal, briefings if that helps to increase understanding, awareness and debate.

The Council should always be on the lookout to find new ways of opening up its work to non-members. We should also be ready to fully use existing opportunities to demonstrate the openness and transparency of our operations. We very much regret, for example, the fact that the position of some Council

members prevents the wider circulation of reports from panels of experts working for the Council's subsidiary bodies. Experts' reports should be published as a matter of course.

Equally, however, we should be clear that many discussions must be held without record, behind closed doors, among the 15 members of the Council. To suggest otherwise is not serious.

The Security Council's dialogue with regional bodies needs to continue and to become more strategic. Regional organizations can bring added value to the Council's deliberations with local knowledge and expertise, as has been shown this year in the Council's interactions with the Arab League and the African Union.

It is also important that the Council is flexible when considering how new technology can aid our work. Social media networks have played a significant role in some of the momentous events in the Middle East in the past year, including in Libya, Egypt and Syria. These networks spread news, pictures and ideas directly into society at a speed unimaginable even just a few years ago. The situations develop quite literally before our eyes, and the Council needs to consider how that affects our ability to stay on the front foot. Ensuring a robust online digital presence, including by supporting live broadcasts of Council meetings on the Internet, is part of the answer. Using videoconference technology more regularly to get on-the-ground assessments also helps in this regard.

But we must all be ready to accept that the Council may need to address issues more quickly and act faster. Twenty-four-hour news coverage, social media networks and the ubiquity of mobile telephones mean that "wait and see" will become a less and less acceptable position if the Security Council is to remain at the forefront of international efforts to maintain peace and security. This is an ongoing process. The Security Council needs to be prepared to evolve continually if it is to operate as effectively and transparently as possible.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm the United Kingdom's commitment to participate in this important process.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important open debate on working methods of the Security Council. Brazil has long been supportive of improvements in working methods that make the Council more transparent, inclusive and accessible. As a Council member, we have remained attentive and responsive to the needs and interests of the wider membership.

Brazil supported and welcomed the adoption last year of the revised presidential note 507 (S/2010/507), in particular the intention expressed by members to maintain regular interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission and to enhance dialogue with troop-contributing countries, the reference to the increasing use of informal interactive dialogue by the Council in recent years, and the new section on planning and reporting for Security Council missions. Under the chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has been looking into ways to enhance the Council's transparency, accountability and efficiency. Such efforts can greatly benefit from further interaction and dialogue with the wider membership.

Last February, during our presidency of the Security Council, Brazil made a conscious effort to involve every member of the Council in its deliberations and keep them constantly informed of developments, so as to help build unity of purpose. We also sought to keep in close contact with all parties directly concerned with the issues of which the Council was seized.

At the end of the month, Brazil organized a briefing for non-members of the Council to exchange views on issues covered during the month, the first of that kind since 2005.

It is essential that non-members have the opportunity to be heard and have their views duly taken into account and, therefore, to legitimately influence the decisions especially relevant to them. The more the Security Council moves in that direction, the more it will observe the letter and spirit of the Charter. Enhancing the Council's outreach to non-members will greatly contribute to strengthening its credibility and increase the effectiveness of its decisions, especially concerning the implementation of resolutions by all Member States.

As suggested in the concept note (S/2011/726, annex), I would like to point out some concrete measures designed to further improve the working methods of the Security Council.

We fully agree that the Council should strengthen the trend of meeting more often in public. In fact, it should meet in public as a general rule, without prejudice to the usefulness of consultations of the whole in preparing Council decisions. Private meetings should be reserved for exceptional circumstances. Even some traditionally private meetings could be turned into public sessions. A clear example is the annual briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice. As suggested by the President of the Court, the interaction between the Council and the Court should be more frequent. Both organs stand to benefit from a more regular exchange of information on the work being carried out, without prejudice to their independence and the specific nature of each body.

On the relationship between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), more should be done to make full use of the advisory role of the Commission. The Chairs of the PBC country-specific configurations should be invited to participate in relevant consultations as often as possible.

We also believe that it would be useful for the functioning of the Council and its overall legitimacy if it adopted the practice of consulting with non-members on a regular basis, especially members with a special interest in the substantive matter under consideration by the Security Council and holding frequent, timely and qualitative briefings for non-members, even granting non-members access to the subsidiary bodies of the Council, including the right to participate, as appropriate.

In regard to accountability, I would like to highlight the importance of enhanced procedures that could help to monitor and assess the manner in which the resolutions adopted by the Council are interpreted and implemented, in particular those that authorize the use of force. Brazil raised that point during the open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict earlier this month (see S/PV.6650). When the use of force is authorized by the Council, the Member States or organizations entrusted with that responsibility are accountable to the Council and to the broader membership. We believe that an in-depth discussion on objective parameters is needed in order to ensure such accountability. There is a need to enhance the Council's procedures so as to ensure that the implementation of resolutions involving the use of force does not raise doubts regarding the objectives of the action to be taken. The way in which resolutions are implemented should be a matter for consideration by the Council itself.

In that context, reports on military operations should be required and should include such parameters as proportionality and the fit between the measures taken and the goals to be achieved. We invite Member States to further reflect on and discuss the benefit of specific mechanisms to follow up on the implementation of mandates, for the purposes of monitoring and assessment and reporting to the Security Council during the course of military action so that the duties of accountability are fulfilled.

To conclude, Mr. President, it must be noted that some of the shortcomings in the Security Council's working methods cannot be entirely corrected without real reform, including changes in the Council's current power structure. In order for the Council to be aligned with the current political realities, it should be enlarged in the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, with increased representation of developing countries in both. We remain convinced that such comprehensive reform would enable the Council to make a fresh start and would ultimately give rise to new and improved dynamics in its daily work.

May I stress that Brazil will continue to work — inside and outside the Security Council — towards effective improvements in its working methods, with a view to making the Council more transparent, inclusive and accessible.

Ms. DiCarlo (United States of America): The United States appreciates the commitment of Portugal to improving the working methods of the Security Council, as shown by your initiative, Mr. President, in convening this fourth open debate on the topic.

Additionally, we recognize Ambassador Ivan Barbalić of Bosnia and Herzegovina for his work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and the excellent management of those issues by the Bosnian Mission.

Our discussions of the working methods of the Council are important in order to ensure that the Council remains able to address the challenges of the twenty-first century. Acting on behalf of the membership of the United Nations, the Council bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It is essential that, in carrying out

this role, its work be as effective, efficient and transparent as possible. Article 30 of the Charter mandates the Council to adopt its own rules of procedure. In doing so, the Council recognizes the need for other United Nations Members who are our partners in the maintenance of international peace and security to be informed of and appropriately involved in the work of the Council.

To that end, the Council some years ago revitalized its Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Our discussion today builds upon the Group's extensive work and the recommendations outlined in the annex to note by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2006/507. In that regard, we would like, once again, to thank Japan for its efforts to develop updates to that note.

We should bear in mind the steps taken thus far by the Council to implement those recommendations. With respect to transparency, Council Presidents brief non-Council members shortly after the adoption of the programme of work each month. Each Council President further prepares a published assessment of its month-long term, thereby expanding the information available to all Member States on the problems facing the Council and how those problems have been addressed.

The Council has increased its interaction with non-Council members by holding open debates and informal discussions. We are encouraged by the growing number of Member States that choose to participate in open meetings, such as today's, and look forward to subsequent open sessions on a range of issues that are relevant to the Council's agenda.

The Council has further welcomed the Chairs of the various country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission, inviting them to participate in Council deliberations. The subsidiary bodies of the Council, such as the Counter-Terrorism Committee, have held more open meetings, and sanctions committee Chairs have organized more open briefings for the broader United Nations membership to discuss sanctions regime objectives and committee activities. Sanctions committees have also invited representatives of Member States to brief them on issues of mutual concern, and we encourage interested Member States to pursue such opportunities.

Troop-contributing countries play a critical role in the development of peacekeeping operations. The Council has sought to increase the role that troop-contributing countries play in discussions of the mandates of missions to which they contribute. To highlight the importance that the United States assigns to troop-contributing countries, President Obama met with top contributors in September 2009 to hear their perspective on ways to improve United Nations peacekeeping.

The Council has also increased its interaction with non-Council members through informal processes, such as groups of friends. The Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, for instance, informs the Council's actions through inclusive and transparent dialogue between Council and non-Council members.

Making the work of the Council more efficient requires constant effort. In that regard, we all face the challenge of balancing the substance with the length of our remarks. All of us, Council members and non-Council members alike, should aim to convey our message succinctly, so that as many Member States as possible can speak with the many other States that are present to hear them.

Today's debate offers members the opportunity to share views on whether the practical applications of the innovations listed in the 507 note have helped them to better follow and participate in the Council's work. The United States welcomes constructive comments that will inform future efforts of the Working Group and allow it to assess the effectiveness of measures to enhance transparency, dialogue and efficiency. We look forward to continued discussions on those issues and thank the Portuguese presidency once again for this initiative.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

(*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow us to thank you, Mr. President, for convening

this open debate on the working methods of the Security Council and for the lucid concept note that has been circulated. We hope that this debate will renew our commitment to making further progress in improving the efficiency and transparency of the Security Council.

Our delegation associates itself fully with the statement to be made by the representative of Egypt, who will speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and we also support the statement to be made by, and the proposals to be submitted by, the group of five small nations (S-5), with which we traditionally identify ourselves. From a national perspective, we will make just a few brief comments.

We take this opportunity to recognize the significant advances and improvements in some practices and new measures, which were reflected in the 507 note. Along those lines, the unusual detail provided in the report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2011 (A/66/2), especially in its introduction highlighting some of that progress, is commendable. However, we think that there is still ample room for improvements. In that regard, we would like to highlight some of the practices that we feel should be improved or implemented more consistently.

First, we attach importance to the interaction with the broader membership through briefings, not only at the beginning of each presidency, but also at the conclusion thereof. It seems a very timely and useful practice, which we see as a voluntary exercise in accountability. We recognize, in that regard, the initiative taken by Brazil, which has, unfortunately, not been replicated by other members of the Council.

Secondly, we believe it is important to continue improving the interaction between the Chairs of the Committees and Working Groups and all Member States. In particular, it seems necessary to us to develop a mechanism of interaction with those member States that will assume the chairmanships, especially with those entering for the first time as members of the Council, and to allow them, if not the opportunity to express their preferences, at least the possibility of better preparing for the role and work being assigned to them.

Thirdly, we also consider it appropriate to emphasize the importance of the interaction between Council members and their respective regional groups. I refer specifically to our experience in the Latin American and Caribbean Group, where we consistently receive a monthly report of the activities of the Council during the course of each month. I take this opportunity to thank the delegations of Brazil and Colombia, which have kept us constantly informed this year. Of course, we would like to see the reports become more candid, especially because they are often restricted to an account of the meetings and decisions adopted by the Council without going into detail as to the most interesting aspects of why one or another action was adopted by the Council.

A fourth and final aspect that we would like to highlight is that of the rationalization of the programme of work. We are pleased to see the progress in the disclosure of the programme of work and its availability. However, we consider it possible to improve on the Council's allocation of time to its routine work, allowing greater availability for conflict prevention and resolution. Along those lines, the rationalization of the Council's agenda is also still a work in progress; despite the progress made in establishing a procedure for the elimination of items, there have been few concrete results.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (spoke in French): Mr. President, in my personal capacity, I would like to express my pleasure in seeing you preside over the Security Council and also in seeing someone wearing a bowtie as President of the Council.

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the group of five small nations (S-5), comprising Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland, and I would like to thank Portugal, not only for the timely organization of the fourth debate on this important matter, but also for Portugal's overall commitment to this relevant topic, namely, the working methods of the Security Council. The S 5 appreciates this opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the Council, as we believe that decisions on behalf of the membership of the United Nations are more effective when they are taken in a transparent, inclusive and accountable manner.

Let us imagine for a moment that we were sitting here some decades ago, for example in 1950, discussing action during the war on the Korean peninsula, or in 1960, sending the first peacekeepers to

the Congo, or in 1966, taking decisions on the first set of binding sanctions against Rhodesia. Let us try to imagine not only how differently the world was shaped at that time and how differently Council members may have been interacting, but in particular how radically different the way of working must have been back in the 1950s and 1960s. At that time, as was noted by the representative of the United Kingdom, there were no computers, no mobile telephones, no rapid reporting by our embassies during a given crisis. Nor did we receive media alerts or images from a remote part of the world after a massacre had been committed. Our predecessors had to make strenuous efforts to find reliable information and await instructions from capitals by cable before they could use their room for negotiations.

I assume no one in this room would deny that technological progress has had a huge impact on our working methods. The new proximity, interconnectivity and extremely fast flow of information in and out of this Chamber have, on the one hand, increased pressure on the Council, pushing it to take rapid, legitimate and effective actions, and, on the other, increased the stakes in handling information responsibly.

In addition, the Council has become increasingly more active over the decades. There have never been so many sanction regimes, United Nations operations in the field or other Council mechanisms as there are today. Our predecessors had fewer items on their agenda to monitor or Council decisions to implement.

It was therefore easier to track the Council's work, whether as a member or as a non-member of the Council. Therefore, while the main tasks of the Security Council as set forth in the United Nations Charter under Articles 1 and 24 have remained the same, the ways of performing those tasks and the consequences of a given decision have dramatically changed.

The Council is still working either under the provisional rules of procedure prepared in 1946 for the first meeting after its creation — which were last updated in 1982 — or is following informal traditions. The Council will agree when I say that these rules of procedure are neither adequate nor adapted to the needs of today.

In 2005, the World Summit — in line with Article 10 of the United Nations Charter, which clearly mandates the General Assembly to make recommendations, including to the Security Council — reflected in its Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) the need for far-reaching measures to achieve the goals of legitimacy, transparency and accountability. The S-5 group was formed for the sole purpose of contributing to the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council.

In 2006, we presented to the General Assembly a draft resolution with a set of recommendations (A/60/L.49). The Council reacted with presidential note S/2006/507, which was an important step in Council working methods. The S-5 also welcomed the update of note 507 in 2010 (S/2010/507). We commend Japan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and all the other members of the Council involved for their invaluable contribution to improving the working methods in recent years.

However, the implementation of the recommendations in note 507 has been inconsistent. While commending the Council for the progress achieved so far, the S-5 group continues to argue for improvement in their implementation. We therefore call for the adoption of an action plan to implement the recommendations in note 507. The Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions could be mandated with this task and could regularly report to the Council and the wider membership of the United Nations on progress in its work, including in the analytical part of the Council's annual report.

The S-5 also considers that complementary measures are needed to enable the Council to enhance its authority and effectiveness and to be more responsive to the United Nations membership as a whole. There is considerable agreement among Member States that the Security Council must improve its working methods. That agreement transcends the various interest groups with regard to the enlargement of the Council and forms a large common denominator.

This is why a few months ago the S-5 group presented a new draft resolution with concrete, pragmatic and easily implementable proposals. In this resolution, we suggest measures to enhance the implementation of note 507, and we propose further measures. The draft resolution is attached to my written intervention. This text, on which we have consulted with the membership as a whole, has met

with considerable support. Let me highlight some of the proposals.

First, as chair of a country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, I appreciate that the chairs are invited to the relevant Council debates. I support statements by France and the United Kingdom, among others, favouring stronger interaction between the Council and the Commission. I encourage the Council to take a step further and invite chairs to informal consultations as well, as my colleague the representative of Brazil proposed earlier. And more generally, peacebuilding considerations should be integrated at all levels of the Council's work.

Secondly, with its composition in 2012, the Council will have unique expertise in peacekeeping. We therefore encourage it to continue to improve the drafting of mandates and to articulate clear goals for new operations, taking into account the needs on the ground as expressed by the relevant stakeholders, including non-State actors. The Council should strengthen its cooperation with troop- and police-contributing countries. And the Council should review progress on the basis of clear criteria and, at the end of each mandate, draw the lessons learned from the experience.

Desiring to make its contribution, Switzerland commissioned from the Center on International Cooperation a study of working methods of the Council in the case of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad. Advance copies are available outside the Chamber. A discussion of the findings will be organized soon.

Thirdly and lastly, the designation of the chairs of subsidiary bodies by the five permanent members only, and of the elected members only, is an anachronism. Likewise, the practice of the P-5 taking the lead on nearly all country-specific resolutions is outdated. We encourage the P-5 to revisit these practices. Given the complexity of today's world, the Council should make the best use of the expertise of each of its members.

The S-5 group takes note of the position of the P-5 that improving the working methods is a matter for the Security Council only. If the Council wants to be solely responsible for its working methods, it should act accordingly by improving them soon.

The S-5 group has always taken a constructive approach and will continue to do so. We are ready to work hand in hand with the Council to improve openness and transparency. That is why we call upon the Council to take up our proposals and to relaunch the process for improvement. If there is no action, calls for reform by the wider membership will become more pressing. That would put at risk the relevance of the most important organ for ensuring peace and security in the world.

In closing, I wish to recall the commitment of the S-5 group to the cause of improving the working methods and to stress its constructive approach. The group is ready to embark on an institutionalized dialogue with the Security Council on implementing note 507 and on any other improvement in its working methods along the lines that the S-5 set out in its draft resolution. We expect the Council to react promptly, openly and constructively to our ideas. The S-5 will remain seized of this matter.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): At the outset, allow me to express my deep gratitude to you, Mr. President, for your initiative, which includes convening today's open debate on the working methods of the Security Council — an issue on which Japan places great importance — and holding a separate and in-depth discussion in the General Assembly earlier this month on the annual report of the Security Council. We also acknowledge the work of Ambassador Barbalić, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his contribution in his capacity as Chairperson of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

The discussion on working methods is crucial to ensuring prompt and effective action on the part of the Council for the maintenance of international peace and security and to securing the support of the wider United Nations membership in the implementation of Council decisions. Continuous attention and effort, such as the better use and implementation of presidential note 507 as revised last year (S/2010/507), are vital to achieving improvement in the working methods.

The issue of working methods is also important in the context of Security Council reform. The intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform have identified working methods as one of the five key issues for reform. Achieving real progress in

this area will require continuing and sincere efforts on the part of the Council as well as initiatives led by Member States. In this connection, we highly appreciate the dedication shown by the S-5 group.

We recognize that the Security Council has been engaged in an effort to increase transparency and has made some significant progress in that regard, as reflected in its more frequent interaction with non-Council members. It has also shown some success in improving efficiency. For example, the programme of work is briefed by the presidency to non-Council members at the beginning of each month and is readily available on the Council website. In its interaction with non-Council members, the Council has not only engaged in dialogues with relevant parties such as troop- and police-contributing countries and the Peacebuilding Commission but has also made use of informal interactive discussions. Such improvements are duly reflected in the revised note 507.

Furthermore, under Japan's initiative, a comprehensive *Handbook on the Working Methods of the Security Council*, commonly referred to as the "green book", was compiled to assist newly elected members of the Council, as well as the wider membership, in gaining an understanding of the workings of the Security Council. I am delighted to announce that the handbook is now available as a publication of the United Nations. It can now be purchased for $12 at the United Nations bookstore or online at amazon.com. Incidentally, the colour is no longer green, but white and blue.

We also listened with keen interest to your presentation, Mr. President, at the General Assembly, which described recent efforts in the Council to improve its internal efficiency, and commend members of the Council on such undertakings.

While it is important to acknowledge the progress made to date, we must continue our efforts to improve the working methods. More specifically, the improvements that we hope to see include improvement of the monthly assessments by the President on the work of the Council through summaries of major discussions. That will help the creation of a more substantive annual report.

It is also critical to acknowledge that effectiveness is not antithetical to openness. The Security Council must recognize that interaction with concerned parties is necessary in order for the Council to take prompt and effective actions. In that context, we note that progress in improvement of the Council's working methods cannot be achieved without the cooperation of the permanent members. Needless to say, a periodic review of progress is necessary, and, with help from existing and newly elected members, we hope for continued engagement on that issue in the coming years.

In conclusion, the participation of many non-Council members in today's meeting testifies to the fact that the working methods remain a critical issue. We appreciate the work of countries that have helped promote the issue from both inside and outside, such as the S-5 and Portugal. Japan will also maintain its engagement in this very important issue in order to promote continuous improvement in the working methods of the Security Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Jordan.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan): I, too, would like to thank you, Mr. President, most warmly for having convened a meeting devoted to working methods of the Security Council, I also wish to congratulate you on your distinguished leadership in presiding over the work of the Council for this month. Placing yourself at the end of today's list of speakers is a gracious gesture that is deeply appreciated.

I wish to use my following intervention in this thematic debate not to repeat what the Permanent Representative of Switzerland has offered in the way of thoughts governing the position of the group of five small nations (S-5), which, naturally, we support fully, but to focus on the two paragraphs 18 and 19 of the S-5 draft resolution, which cover the use, or threat of use, of the veto. I will attempt to explain why we have inserted them into our draft resolution, given that they are of direct relevance to the work of the Security Council and, in particular, to the permanent members.

The Security Council derives its rights and obligations from the United Nations Charter. Its functions and powers are spelled out broadly in Article 24 of the Charter, including, inter alia, its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and its obligation to act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter in the discharge of its functions.

While Article 24, paragraph 1, appears to be clear in its ordinary meaning, over the past 65 years, our predecessors have argued — and often — over whether or not "primary" is equal in meaning to "exclusive". That discussion has not found consensus between the permanent members and the rest of the membership, and I will not dwell on it today. What was also missing in our previous discussions was a common understanding over the ordinary meaning of the word "responsibility", which has, unfortunately, been regarded by some as conferring rights, without due regard being equally paid to the implied duties flowing from that responsibility.

What I would, therefore, like to fix our attention on today is the next paragraph in Article 24 — paragraph 2. I would also like to invite members to read that important provision together with Article 1, paragraph 1, which we believe we are required to undertake for a correct reading of the Charter.

Article 24, paragraph 2, states:

> "In discharging these duties the Security Council shall act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations".

It reads "shall act". It does not read may act, or should act. It reads "shall act". In other words, there is no discretion here. What we find instead is an obligation. It is also worth noting that, like Article 24, paragraph 2, the Council's powers pursuant to Chapter VII, set out in Article 39, are similarly couched in obligatory language: shall determine and shall make recommendations, or decide.

The second part of paragraph 2 of Article 24 then explains where, in the relevant chapters of the Charter, the specific powers of the Council are laid down, and yet all of it rests — must rest, as I noted a few minutes ago — on the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Among the purposes of the United Nations, as defined in Chapter I, Article 1, of the Charter, and of greatest relevance to the responsibility of the Security Council and our discussion today is the purpose elaborated in the first paragraph of Article 1, which reads:

> "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law".

That last phrase "and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law" was inserted by Senator Arthur Vandenberg of the United States, on 2 May 1945, and accepted immediately by the "Big Four", and, subsequently, by the rest of the representatives in San Francisco, without argument and by consensus.

So, when considered together, Article 24, paragraph 2, and Article 1, paragraph 1, in very abbreviated form, read: in discharging its duties the Council shall act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and, therefore — my addition — in conformity with the principles of justice and international law.

Now, we must understand two issues. The Charter confers those powers on the whole Council and does not specify what each individual member of the Council should do. That much is undeniable. If, however, the use or threat of use of a veto by a permanent member prevents the Council, by virtue of the majority required in Article 27, paragraph 3, from acting to deter, prevent or dismantle alleged serious violations of the sort that not only threaten international peace and security, but also create an obligation erga omnes on all Member States to address it, the question arises as to whether that exercise by one permanent member subverts the Council's ability to fulfil its responsibilities under Article 24 and to uphold the principles of justice and international law, in accordance with Article 1, paragraph 1.

Should we continue, therefore, to read Article 27, paragraph 3, in a manner in which it effectively eclipses the purposes of the United Nations and the responsibilities of the Security Council? Are we not entitled, or even obliged, to look towards an understanding that reconciles those provisions?

We may be able to continue as we are when dealing with lesser crimes but, when faced with the worst systematic abominations of human cruelty that often threaten international peace and security, such questions become increasingly difficult to ignore, for there is little that is common between normal criminality and the outer extremity of human misconduct.

I would ask the Council to consider, for example, the description provided by the Nuremberg Tribunal in its 1947 judgment, following the main proceedings prosecuted by Ben Ferencz in the trial of the Einsatzgruppen. The Tribunal found:

> "If what the Prosecution maintains is true, we have here participation in a crime of such unprecedented brutality and of such inconceivable savagery that the mind rebels against its own thought image and the imagination staggers in the contemplation of a human degradation beyond the power of language to adequately portray."

And this is the second point we need to understand. However we interpret the principles of justice, when there are serious allegations of crimes being committed — crimes of a gravity approximating the description found in the aforementioned judgment, and which threaten international peace and security — any member of the Council, and particularly if it is a permanent member, voting against measures otherwise agreed upon by a majority of the Security Council should at least explain how its position is consistent with the Charter — that is, with the purposes and principles of justice — and international law.

The S-5 is aware of the foundational and historic role played by the permanent members. Whatever we may say about some of the Council's performances in the past, the permanent members must be given due credit for having prevented, in a nuclear age, the recurrence of the sort of war that devastated very large portions of the Earth twice in the twentieth century. And we are not calling, as the S-5, for a Charter amendment to have the veto abolished or even restricted. The veto does have an important role. But that role should now be reconciled with Articles 24 (2) and 1 (1) — Articles that should no longer simply be overlooked. And this could best be achieved through the forging of a new understanding.

We therefore suggest to the permanent members, and we do so most respectfully, to consider refraining, voluntarily, from the use or threat of use of the veto altogether in situations where there are serious allegations of genocide, crimes against humanity and grave breaches of international humanitarian law. The S-5, in offering the content of paragraphs 18 and 19 of its draft resolution, to be presented in due course to the General Assembly pending final consultations, is basing these recommendations on the right accorded to the General Assembly under Article 10 of the United Nations Charter.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): I have the pleasure to speak today on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). At the outset, I would like to convey the Movement's appreciation to the Portuguese presidency of the Security Council — and to you personally, Ambassador Moraes Cabral — for having convened this important open debate to discuss the progress achieved in the implementation of the measures set out in the note by the President of the Security Council of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507), and the related concept paper (S/2011/726, annex) to direct the discussions towards enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the work of the Security Council in order to meet the expectations of the general membership of the United Nations.

I would like also to seize this opportunity to congratulate Azerbaijan, Guatemala, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo — members of the Movement — on their election as non-permanent members of the Security Council for the years 2012-2013, and to thank the outgoing members Gabon, Lebanon and Nigeria for all their efforts in support of NAM principled positions.

Without prejudice to the interlinkage between Security council reform and improving its working methods, as the latter represents a component of the overall reform of the Council pursuant to General Assembly decision 62/557, the Non-Aligned Movement attaches great importance to the issue of improving the working methods of the Security Council, as reflected in its long-standing position reiterated in the relevant paragraphs of the Bali Final Document (see S/2011/407), adopted by the sixteenth NAM Ministerial Conference held in Bali, Indonesia, in May 2011.

The Non-Aligned Movement appreciates the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and the efforts of its Chair, Bosnia and Herzegovina. NAM stresses the importance of further enhancing its key role in improving the working methods of the Security Council, taking into due consideration the positions of the larger membership of the Organization, particularly

during the annual General Assembly debate on the report. In this regard, the Movement expects that the upcoming annual reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly shall reflect in detail the activities of the working Group and the conclusions of its deliberations, including the steps taken to promote the full implementation of presidential note S/2010/507 and any other future notes, in order to properly analyse and assess what has been achieved and what needs to be done.

NAM welcomes the steps taken by the Security Council, pursuant to note 507, in publishing its updated programme of work and the tentative forecast on the Council's website in a timely manner, and also appreciates the practice of several Presidents of the Security Council of briefing the wider membership about the monthly programme of work following its adoption by the Council at the beginning of each month, and in this regard looks forward to that practice being complemented by the holding of informal wrap-up sessions at the end of each presidency to evaluate what has been achieved.

In relation to this issue, the Movement welcomes the personal initiative of some Presidents of the Security Council in preparing a comprehensive and analytical assessment of the work of the Council under their presidency. This positive trend, when institutionalized, will definitely provide a more coherent account of how the work of the Security Council evolves each month in dealing with issues on its agenda. Therefore, those monthly assessments should include cases in which the Council has failed to act, including the reasons for the resort to veto, and the views expressed by its members during the deliberations on the agenda items under its consideration.

Furthermore, the assessments and the annual report should elaborate the circumstances under which the Council adopts different outcomes, be they resolutions, presidential statements, press statements or elements to the press. It is imperative that the General Assembly be aware not only of the decisions adopted by the Council, but also of the rationale, reasons and backgrounds of those decisions, as well as the effectiveness and impact of those decisions on the situation on the ground.

With regard to the Security Council's annual report, the Movement welcomes as a step forward the informal meetings between the July presidencies of the Council and the wider membership on the preparation of the annual report, which contribute to enhancing the quality of those reports, which still need to be more comprehensive and analytical. It would be relevant to benefit from the input of the Informal Working Group on Documentation in the preparation of the annual reports. At the same time, the Security Council should submit, pursuant to Articles 15 (1) and 24 (3) of the United Nations Charter, special reports for the consideration of the General Assembly.

The Movement notes the increase in the number of public meetings, and expects that the quantitative increase of those meetings shall be associated with a qualitative improvement through the provision of real opportunities and more meaningful exchanges of view to take into account the contributions of non-Council members, particularly those whose interests are or may be directly affected by possible decisions of the Council. Furthermore, statements or comments should not be restricted to Council members after briefings by the Secretariat or the Special Envoys and Representatives of the Secretary-General; the concerned party should be given the opportunity to express its views and position on such briefings. The general observations and positions formulated by numerous non-members of the Security Council during its debates or open debates should be properly taken into account in any possible outcome of those debates and should also be reflected in the Council's annual report.

On the other hand, the Movement stresses the importance of convening more frequent Arria Formula meetings as a practical way to ensure more interaction with non-Council members and regional and subregional organizations, and of the Council's continuing to hold informal interactive meetings, similar to the recent meeting on 21 November of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa on lessons learned in coordinating response and supporting local capacity.

The Non-Aligned Movement welcomes the continued briefings and consultations of the Council with the troop- contributing countries (TCCs) as part of the effort to plan and execute peacekeeping operations more effectively and with clearer mandates. The Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations should involve TCCs more frequently and intensively in its

deliberations through sustained, regular and timely interaction.

The Non-Aligned Movement believes that the initial and major concrete step towards improving the working methods of the Security Council should be to reach an agreement on permanent rules of procedure to replace the current provisional rules, which have been in force for more than 60 years. Moreover, the Security Council should establish its subsidiary organs in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, and those organs should function in a manner that would provide adequate and timely information on their activities to the general membership.

The Security Council should fully take into account the recommendations of the General Assembly on matters relating to international peace and security, consistent with Article 11 (2) of the Charter, instead of continually encroaching on the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council by addressing issues that traditionally fall within the competence of those two organs. In that regard, it is imperative to revisit the relationship between the Security Council and the other principal organs of the Organization in order to restore the missing institutional balance in accordance with the Charter.

Furthermore, regular interaction between the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council is needed in order to discuss and coordinate the agendas and programmes of work of the respective principal organs that they represent in order to establish increased coherence and complementarity among those organs in a mutually reinforcing manner.

It is indeed a positive step for the Security Council to have held three open debates since 2008 on improving its working methods in order to systematically analyse the progress achieved in that regard. The Non-Aligned Movement encourages the Security Council to continue improving that practice, not only by convening those debates, but also by taking into consideration the views and proposals expressed by the non-Council members in any outcome of such debates.

In conclusion, the Movement believes that more steps are needed, along with the necessary political will of Member States, particularly the permanent members of the Council, to improve the working methods of the Council through both the General Assembly and the Security Council. Transparency, accountability and consistency are key elements that the Security Council should observe in all its activities, approaches and procedures. Improving the Council's working methods would no doubt contribute to strengthening its ability to maintain international peace and security and to deal efficiently and effectively with its mounting workload and with the multiplicity and complexity of the issues on its agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): As a member of the group of five small nations (S-5), we align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Switzerland. I will focus my comments on two specific parts of the revised draft General Assembly resolution that we circulated earlier this year.

First, the S-5 advocates a more systematic use of the mechanisms available to the Council to ensure accountability for the most serious crimes under international law. Clearly, the Council has a certain track record in this respect, ranging from the establishment of ad hoc tribunals in the 1990s to two referrals of situations to the International Criminal Court (ICC). At the same time, the engagement of the Council has been ad hoc and not driven primarily by the gravity of the situations. We believe that the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council's important work in this area would benefit from a number of considerations.

Decision-making needs to be based on a thorough assessment. Ideally and time permitting, the Council should act on the basis of extensive information documenting the seriousness of the situation and the nature of the crimes involved, produced for example by a commission of inquiry. At the same time, swift action must of course be possible, as the example of Libya illustrates.

National proceedings should be promoted. Given the primacy of national jurisdictions, the Council should also consider asking more frequently for effective national proceedings to be put in place, supported where necessary by capacity-building measures or by an international component.

There also needs to be sustained political support. Where the Council establishes accountability mechanisms, it should be willing to take the action required to make such mechanisms effective. There has consistently been a problem with the execution of arrest warrants, and Council action in that respect has been consistently lacking. When the ICC is involved, the Council should insist on the cooperation of those States that have a legal obligation in that respect.

As to financial support, lack of financing can be a significant obstacle to the effectiveness of international criminal justice and lead to significant delays in proceedings. While financial aspects have played a significant role with respect to almost all of the accountability mechanisms used by the Council in the past, a discussion is needed in particular with respect to ICC investigations mandated by the Council.

Secondly, the S-5 suggests three measures on the use of the veto. The Permanent Representative of Jordan has just spoken very eloquently on the use of the veto in situations that involve the most serious crimes under international law. In addition, we believe that, given the Council's practice of considering that an abstention does not constitute a non-concurring vote, meaning a veto, a new practice could be established that would allow a permanent member to cast a negative vote without giving it the effect of a veto. That additional tool would enable any permanent member to take a clear position on the substance of a text, while making it clear that it does not intend to block the adoption of a proposal.

As is well known, the S-5 is pursuing its goals on different tracks, including in direct engagement with Council members. We thus highly appreciate today's opportunity. At the same time, we are continuing our efforts to advance our draft resolution in the General Assembly. We remain open to all possible tracks to improve the workings of the Council through a pragmatic and constructive approach. We note, however, that the response from the Council so far has largely been silence.

The President: There are still a number of speakers on my list for this meeting. I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 4 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1:20 p.m.